



6712-01

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION.

Privacy Act of 1974; Matching Program.

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Notice of a New Matching Program.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (Privacy Act), this notice announces the establishment of a matching program the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission or Agency) will conduct with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The purpose of this matching program is to verify the eligibility of applicants to and subscribers of the Universal Service Fund (USF) Lifeline program, which is administered by Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) under the direction of the FCC. More information about this program is provided in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below.

DATES: Written comments are due on or before **[INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**. This computer matching program will commence on **[INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**, unless written comments are received that require a contrary determination, and will conclude on **[INSERT DATE 18 MONTHS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Mr. Leslie F. Smith, Privacy Manager, Information Technology (IT), Room 1-C216, FCC, 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20554, or to Leslie.Smith@fcc.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Leslie F. Smith, (202) 418-0217, or Leslie.Smith@fcc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Lifeline program provides support for discounted broadband and voice services to low-income consumers. Lifeline is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) under FCC direction. Consumers qualify for Lifeline through

proof of income or participation in a qualifying program, such as Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), Federal Public Housing Assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit, or various Tribal-specific federal assistance programs. In a Report and Order adopted on March 31, 2016, the Commission ordered USAC to create a National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier (National Verifier), including the National Lifeline Eligibility Database (LED), that would match data about Lifeline applicants and subscribers with other data sources to verify the eligibility of an applicant or subscriber. The Commission found that the National Verifier would reduce compliance costs for Lifeline service providers, improve service for Lifeline subscribers, and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in the program.

PARTICIPATING AGENCY: Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Transformed - Medicaid Statistical Information System (T-MSIS), System No. 09-07-0541.

AUTHORITY FOR CONDUCTING THE MATCHING PROGRAM:

47 U.S.C. 254; 47 CFR 54.400 et seq.; Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization, et al., Third Report and Order, Further Report and Order, and Order on Reconsideration, 31 FCC Rcd 3962, 4006-21, paras. 126-66 (2016) (2016 Lifeline Modernization Order).

PURPOSE(S):

In the 2016 Lifeline Modernization Order, the FCC required USAC to develop and operate a National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier (National Verifier) to improve efficiency and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in the Lifeline program. The stated purpose of the National Verifier is “to increase the integrity and improve the performance of the Lifeline program for the benefit of a variety of Lifeline participants, including Lifeline providers, subscribers, states, community-based organizations, USAC, and the Commission.” 31 FCC Rcd at 4006, para. 126. To help determine whether Lifeline applicants and subscribers are eligible for Lifeline benefits, the Order contemplates that a USAC-operated Lifeline Eligibility Database (LED) will communicate with information systems and databases operated by other Federal and State agencies. Id. at 4011-2, paras. 135-7. The purpose of this particular program is to

verify Lifeline eligibility by establishing that applicants or subscribers are enrolled in the Medicaid program.

CATEGORIES OF INDIVIDUALS:

The categories of individuals whose information is involved in this matching program include, but are not limited to, those individuals (residing in a single household) who have applied for Lifeline benefits; are currently receiving Lifeline benefits; are individuals who enable another individual in their household to qualify for Lifeline benefits; are minors whose status qualifies a parent or guardian for Lifeline benefits; are individuals who have received Lifeline benefits; or are individuals acting on behalf of an eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) who have enrolled individuals in the Lifeline program.

CATEGORIES OF RECORDS:

The categories of records involved in the matching program include, but are not limited to, a Lifeline applicant or subscriber's full name; physical and mailing addresses; partial Social Security number or Tribal ID number; date of birth; qualifying person's full name (if qualifying person is different from subscriber); qualifying person's physical and mailing addresses; qualifying person's partial Social Security number or Tribal ID number, and qualifying person's date of birth. The National Verifier will transfer these data elements to CMS, which will compare them to records maintained in T-MSIS and then respond either "yes" or "no" that the individual is enrolled in the Medicaid program.

SYSTEM(S) OF RECORDS:

The USAC records shared as part of this matching program reside in the Lifeline system of records, FCC/WCB-1, Lifeline Program, a full notice of which the FCC last published at 82 FR 38686 (August 15, 2017). The CMS records shared as part of this matching program reside in the Transformed - Medicaid

Statistical Information System (T-MSIS), System No. 09-07-0541, a full notice of which the CMS last published at 84 FR 2230 (February 16, 2019).

Federal Communications Commission.

Marlene Dortch,

Secretary.

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